

JUSTICE4DUKES

March 14, 2022

Testimony form Christopher L. Dukes concerning:

HB 5415 -SUPPORT HB 5412- SUPPORT SB 388 – SUPPORT

HB 5416 – OPPOSE SB 16 -OPPOSE

The **Justice4Dukes Coalition** believes personal protection and public safety are high priority and Connecticut citizens must continue to pursue life, liberty, and happiness without further infringement on US Constitutional rights. **Governor's Senate Bill No. 16** (SB 16) would make it a crime for activists and allies to continue to fully enjoy and exercise the freedom afforded by the 1st Amendment while, simultaneously, exercising his/her 2nd Amendment rights to bear arms for personal protection. Combating systemic racism, which is alive and well-protected in Connecticut, and other forms of social injustices is dangerous! Participants have faced hate crimes, motor vehicle attacks, and drive-by shootings. **SB 16**, as written, elevates Constitutional infringements and does nothing to address gun violence. Instead, it allows unarmed activists to be attacked without the ability to legally defend themselves. **SB 16** Targets members of the Black and Brown community who assertively oppose corruption and racism here in Connecticut by way of peaceful demonstrations, vigils, rallies, etc. So far, our government has failed to protect us from the dangers we face while implementing our actions. Therefore, WE MUST retain the ability to protect ourselves as intended by our country's Constitution.

SB 16 illustrates a clear bias against legal and responsible gun ownership, but also a lack of comprehension concerning gun violence and true root causes. For example, in Hartford, police incident #21-1650 is a case involving an attempted murder upon this writer. On the day we observed MLK Day 2021, an unknown gunmen fired three bullets into my car as I drove into my driveway. At the time of this assassination attempt I was the lead activist and star witness for a pending Internal Affairs case against eight Hartford Police personnel, including Chief Jason Thody.

There is absolutely no data to support the registration of high-capacity magazines has prevented a single act of gun violence since 2013. Requiring more registrations does absolutely nothing to achieve Gov. Lamont's stated goals. Instead, resources can be directed to aid the Board of Firearms Examiners who are backlogged with time-consuming appellate hearings related to improper denials of suitable pistol permit applicants. The Governor should take action to reduce the numerous 2nd Amendment violations occurring at the hands of police chiefs across Connecticut.

Lamont blames gun dealers for not taking their legal obligations seriously. Meanwhile Lamont fails to address members at the highest levels of our government (i.e., Chief State Attorney, Attorney General, etc.) who knowingly tolerate and conceal corruption within State agencies.

The Governor fails to establish a need for modifying current open and conceal carry laws nor does his proposal relate to the goals of protecting neighborhoods, getting illegal guns off the street, or providing resources to address root causes of violence. Connecticut has never had a history of gun violence in the areas listed in SB 16, except for schools, and there remains to be no data to confirm existing laws curb mass shootings or any other form of gun violence.

The **Justice4Dukes Coalition** in no way condones any form of domestic violence. We are very cognizant of the fact that some convictions are reached by way of coercive and abusive tactics perpetrated by

JUSTICE4DUKES

State agents. Automatically stripping the rights of even one truly innocent citizen is one too many. In the interest of public safety, **SB 16** should allocate resources to establish a conviction integrity unit to ensure citizens are not robbed of their civil liberties through police and prosecutor violence.

For example, Attorney Danielle O'Connell and Attorney Vicky Melchiorre from the State Attorney's Office of the Judicial District of Hartford, Melisa Roberson (Investigating Social Worker) and other agents from the Department of Children and Families (DCF), and several members of the Hartford Police Department (HPD) including Chief Jason Thody, Detectives Donovan A. Thorpe, Michael R. Heselton, Leopold Clarke, Scott R. Parker, Officer Michael F. Carasone and an unidentified patrolman committed a variety of acts which deprived or conspired to deprive 2nd Amendment, 4th Amendment, 6th Amendment, 8th Amendment, and 14th Amendment protections. These acts include, but are not limited to, intentional false arrest, theft, and intentional fabrication of evidence resulting in a loss of liberty. It is very likely that a pattern of misconduct exists between both the HPD Major Crimes Unit and the State's Attorney's Office.

SB 16 Must not pass as written.

